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THE FIRING ARTS.

PORCELAIN, pottery and glass have been aptly described as "The Firing Arts," because the materials of which the many precious objects embraced under these names have been vitrified in the furnace until each object has become a piece of vitrified rock. The vitrification of any given clay depends upon the substance itself and the degree of heat to which it is subjected. The more perfect the vitrification, the more precious will be the

object. If we take a piece of glass, a piece of rock, a crystal and a diamond and place them side by side we find the diamond gives the most pleasure. This is because it reflects more luminous rays than rock, crystal or glass, and it does so because it is more compact, more dense, more homogeneous; because it has been transmuted at a higher temperature. Accordingly, the higher the temperature to which the piece of porcelain has been subjected the more perfect will be its vitrification, and the nearer will be its aspect to that of precious stones. It will be quite possible to compare all the different porcelains of the world with respect to their vitrification; but such a category is not desirable, because the value of porcelain depends also to a great extent upon the country in which it is made, its history and traditional associations, the originality of its form and decoration, all of which are sources of quality and preciousness that are part of the substance itself.

In beginning a new department of our magazine under the heading of "Pottery, Porcelain and Glass" it is not our intention to describe at length the history of these beautiful arts, which has been told to the world over and over again with much richness of detail in books specially referring thereto; but we cannot avoid remarking that it is to Chinese porcelain that European and the Eastern ceramic arts are due. According to the legends, Chinese pottery goes as far back as 2960 B. C., and the manufacture of porcelain from kaolin as far back as 200 B. C. Chinese porcelain at an early date found its way to Japan on the one hand and through Persia to Europe on the other. The most marked advances in the way of Chinese porcelain were made in the fifteenth century. Since then there has been a steadily progressive improvement. The infinite variety of form in the Chinese vases, their delicacy, elegance and highly artistic value are well known. Art porcelains, colored films, decorations under the film, work with uncarved designs are among the incomparable wonders produced by the Chinese. Their masterpieces of skill and coloring are seen in the porcelains with polychromatic combinations, in which appear human figures, garden scenes, peonies, hawthorn, birds, butterflies, bats, dragons and monsters of all sorts, scrolls, conventional foliage and diapers. These pieces are prized particularly for their tones of color. These colors are both gentle and powerful, and display the most brilliant of imaginable hues. There is the gorgeous *sang de boeuf* and

there are the splendid coral reds, and some with beautiful tints of rose due to the chloride of gold. There is a whole family of green porcelains, including apple and olive green, the most beautiful tones of yellow, and splendid tones of mirror black and ivory white, and others of plum and peach color. There are light violets, strange tones of cobalt, turquoise, ultramarine and lavender, with imitations of jasper, chalcedony and marble. Chinese art is seen at its highest in these wonderful productions which impress one with the art of antiquity, calm splendor, the glamour of an elder world and an alien civilization, and of life at once ideal and immutable. They are the concentrated poetry of a race and of generations of culture, and one of the finest of the decorative arts.

A DESIGN FOR A VASE OR JARDINIÈRE.

By E. T. REEVES.

DESIGN OF POPPIES.



HE design on opposite page is for a vase, jardinière, or any round surface, or may be adapted to a tray or plate by changing the arrangement of the raised paste work.

Begin by making a careful drawing of the design. It will be easier to draw and paint the flowers and background first, and when dry draw the paste design. The paste can be put over the color for the first firing.

The centers of all the flowers are a pale green, the stamens yellow. The color of the petals toward the center becomes very pale, either white, purplish, or yellowish. Paint broadly for the first firing, beginning at the outside edge of the petals, working toward the center, changing the color as you go. Where the masses of stamens show paint yellow, but where the petals show through the stamens paint as if they were not there. Do not try to get too much detail for the first firing. After the work is dry, with a fine brush and some taking-out mixture draw the stamens which have been left out, and after it has stood for a minute or two wipe deftly off with a small wad of cotton, leaving the white china. This can be tinted with yellow. It is a much simpler and easier way than to try and paint around every little stamen. The work must, however, be thoroughly dry, or it will wipe off where you don't want it to. A little practice will make one skillful.

Poppies are of such various colorings that one may paint them almost any color and have them true to nature. In the originals of this study two were scarlet, one pink and one a dark purplish maroon.

The two lower poppies are scarlet. Use carnation Nos. 1 and 2, red brown and yellow brown, dark green, apple green, silver yellow and brown green. Give the local color of the upper petals with carnation No. 1, and the under with No. 2, and strengthen in the second firing with red brown. In the shadows add some yellow brown. The shadows under the stamens have a slightly purplish tone. Centers are pale green or apple green and silver yellow marked with brown green. Paint the gray tones over the red with a paint wash of dark green, being careful not to get it too dark, as it is a strong color.

Lay in the center flower with carmine for the first firing, using apple green to make grays. The deeper color may be painted in the second firing with carnation No. 2. Be careful not to get the carmine too heavy where the carnation is to go.